

October 2016

When choosing hands to write about in these articles I have always been careful to make sure that the hero of the piece is someone inspirational, someone whose card sense and table presence you can only admire and try to emulate. Someone who is equally debonair and awe- inspiring away from the table as he is when playing. But enough about me, this month's hero is Jarrad Dunbar, a good BBO buddy of mine from Down Under. Here he and his partner George Bartley are representing Southern Australia in the Australian Interstate Youth Teams and Jarrad is sitting South on the following deal.

Bidding

Dealer East
E-W vul.

South	W	N	E	S
♠ AQ9542			pass	2S(1)
♥ K4	pass	4NT	pass	5D(2)
♦ 1043	pass	6S	all pass	
♣ 98				

- 1) Weak 2
- 2) One key card

West leads the ♥A and dummy comes down with the following hand....

George

♠ KJ107
♥ 5
♦ AQJ7
♣ AQJ5

Jarrad

♠ AQ9542
♥ K4
♦ 1043
♣ 98

Cue bidding might have kept them out of this marginal slam but given George is only 12 years old he hasn't learnt any of that advanced stuff yet so we can only admire his

optimism.. On first sight it looks as if declarer needs both minor suit kings onside to make, but on a little more analysis one realizes that if West started with less than 4 diamonds to the king, left to his own devices South can set up a club discard from hand by playing small diamonds up to dummy and finessing. However Jarrad is put to the test immediately when West switches to the ♦8.

Plan your play.

Initial Analysis

We all know that sometimes bridge can be a game of bluff and counter bluff. How often have we been put to the test when early on in the game the opponent leads through dummy's AQ? Does he hold the king, where a finesse will work? Is this card a singleton, in which case we need to hop up with the ace now, or can we trust him to hold another card in this suit? And how many times have we got this situation wrong and how galling is that?

But there is a clue here to West's holding that you may have missed, but wasn't lost on Jarrad. This is a youth teams tournament and most of the competitors are too young and naive to stoop to the sneaky ways some of our elders have learnt over the years. So Jarrad decided this was an honest card and played the ace, but the king did not drop. Is the contract doomed? Should the declarer admit defeat? Or has the wizard of Oz one final piece of magic up his sleeve? All will be revealed in the next chapter.

Final Analysis

Jarrad had a plan. After winning the diamond in dummy, he drew trumps, cashed the ♥K, took a club finesse which held, then ran all of his trumps coming down to this position when he played the last trump.

George

♠ -
♥ -
♦ Q
♣ AQ5

Jarrad

♠ 2
♥ -
♦ 104
♣ 9

When he played the 2 of trumps and discarded his last diamond from dummy, if East started with the ♦K and at least 4 clubs, he was now squeezed. In fact if West started with the ♦K and at least 4 clubs he would also be squeezed in this position.

Here is the full deal

	North	
	♠ KJ107	
	♥ 5	
	♦ AQJ7	
	♣ AQJ5	
West		East
♠ 3		♠ 86
♥ AQJ872		♥ 10963
♦ 986		♦ K52
♣ K103		♣ 7642
	Jarrad	
	♠ AQ9542	
	♥ K4	
	♦ 1043	
	♣ 98	

So East in fact did start with the ♦K and 4 clubs so the contract was made.
Well done Jarrad!

Conclusion

Often I see players go down in stone cold contracts because they convince themselves that a key card is offside. So my tip this month is this - if you have a backup plan that caters for this eventuality then by all means try that, even if you still end up going down. But if not, adopt the line of play that gives you a chance of making the contract, not the line of play you know is doomed from the start. On this particular hand declarer had a backup plan which proved to be successful on the day. So I leave the last words on this subject with Jarrad Dunbar, the wizard of Oz.

“No worries, mate”.